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In a word, then, this book makes but a slight positive contribution to knowledge, while its chief interest and value consist in its occasional revelations of the inner workings of the empire of Napoleon III. Though written by a partisan, it scarcely increases our admiration or respect for that monarch.

CHARLES F. A. CURRIER.

Ironclads in Action; A Sketch of Naval Warfare from 1855 to 1895, with some Account of the Development of the Battle-ship in England. By H. W. WILSON. With an introduction by Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N. (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1896. Two vols., pp. xxix, 357, xvi, 374.)

A VALUABLE mass of information has been placed before the naval world in this excellent work. Its two volumes comprise over 700 pages, with many handsome illustrations, and as it is quite free from padding, the amount of interesting facts and incidents it contains is most satisfactory. Its merit is enhanced by an introduction from the pen of Captain Mahan, which is in itself a professional contribution worthy of its author as well as a model of literary style.

Mr. Wilson departs but rarely from the attitude of narrator to take up that of critic or judge. In the few instances in which he does so, his deductions are clear and well considered, and the reader sometimes wishes that he had permitted himself more space for detailed argument concerning the principles of naval warfare. His style is characterized by simplicity and exactness—traits that are especially attractive in a narrative of military and naval affairs.

It is not to be expected in so long a narrative as this that Mr. Wilson should be able to weigh all the evidence presented. It is enough for him if the sources of information are of good repute. This has caused him to undervalue ramming in future conflicts, basing his opinions on those of Mr. Laird Clowes, who has presented certain facts as to ramming quite clearly, but whose deductions do not receive the unanimous assent of naval officers. There are but few advocates of the ram who look for results of importance from its use in single-ship encounters. It is with fleets at close quarters that the ram's supreme function will be exercised, and at such a time questions of extreme speed, armor, and heavy guns will be little regarded compared with quickness in turning and the presence on board of a resolute commander.

The author notes that high-angle fire was of little avail in the reduction of the forts on the Mississippi, and that, though the mortar vessels discharged bombs until the ammunition ran short, for all practical purposes Fort Jackson remained intact. This remark attracts attention at the present time when so much of our harbor defence rests upon the efficiency of mortar fire, though it must be remembered that great advance has been

made in mortars since then, and that our present defence system has been thoroughly studied.

The divided command of the Mississippi is indicated by the author as one reason of the failure to defend New Orleans successfully, and he speaks of a general commanding the forts, a commander in charge of the vessels of the Confederate navy, and a separate organization known as the "River Defence," whose vessels were handled by their captains without thought of concerted action. The principle here involved is as old as the existence of war itself, and should be of present interest to this country.

In reading the chapter which deals with the operations off Charleston, we perceive that serious operations at that point were not undertaken before January, 1863, nearly two years after the opening of the war, and the question presents itself, why was not this done earlier? It cannot be expected that Mr. Wilson should take up these matters in a book whose title limits it in some degree to a history of ironclads, but as he devotes considerable space to the blockade, it will not be out of place to notice how little serious criticism of this delay there has been by those who have written on the war of the Rebellion. It would seem that the greatness of the task involved in blockading thousands of miles of coast, and watching hundreds of bays, rivers, and inlets, has prevented Mr. Wilson, in common with many other writers, from recognizing, or at least emphasizing in their writings, that the task might have been avoided; that entrances from the sea to the territory of the Confederacy might have been seized early in the war, and islands and peninsulas commanding the channels might have been occupied by our forces, and held securely by means of our absolute control of the sea. Delay in the beginning was fatal, for old defences were strengthened in the first year and new ones created, which changed practically defenceless positions into formidable strongholds; but, at the outset, the government forces being supreme on the sea and the Confederates having practically nothing, it would have been quite feasible to occupy positions at all or nearly all of the harbors and inlets of the Confederacy, and thus render unnecessary the herculean labor of the ensuing years of the war. Nothing can detract from the bravery and patriotism with which this blockade was maintained, but there is little doubt that, if our naval leaders had been studying the art of war for the twenty years preceding the spring of 1861, on some such lines as Clausewitz and Moltke devised for the German army chiefs, the labor of the blockade would have been vastly reduced, and the Rebellion might easily have been terminated after a two years' struggle. The author announces in his chapter on the blockade, that "The Northerners made their blockade effective by seizing bases on the southern coast," but neither he nor other writers dwell upon the fact that our complete supremacy afloat in the beginning of the war made it possible for us, had we recognized the fact, practically to destroy blockade-running in the first few months of the war.

That the author perceives the value of the study of the art of war in times of peace, is apparent in many pages of this book. He refers to Far-

ragut's long study of fleet formations with small wooden models of his ships, and says that "he combined in an eminent degree scientific knowledge of his profession and courage." Again, on page 159, he unconsciously rebukes those who believe in mechanical invention as deciding future wars, saying plainly that "the whole history of naval warfare is one lesson ; that it is men, and not ships, who decide the issue."

Of the battle of Lissa, as presented by Mr. Wilson, there is little to remark. He mentions that Admiral Tegetthof's tactics lacked elasticity, and that there was danger of his firing into his own ships ; but we are not to suppose that he regards these defects as sufficient to balance the great advantage obtained by massing a military force, whether afloat or ashore, when undertaking a vigorous offence. Concerning Italy, the author's brief and powerful statement covers the whole ground : "Italy chose the royal road to defeat ; she built a great ironclad fleet without training officers and men to take it into action. . . . She neglected that preparation and organization which is the essence of success in war. She forgot to train admirals as she forgot to train sailors. She had no naval staff with plans and information ready in case of war."

Mr. Wilson's second volume contains a chapter, entitled "The Naval Battle of To-morrow," in which the author has grouped the data concerning ironclads and made deductions therefrom as to future ships and their proper tactics. We have mentioned already that the author is at his best when presenting his own views, and is rarely open to criticism except when he presents those of others without analyzing them sufficiently. His discussion of torpedo boats is a case in point. He compares their sphere of action to that of cavalry in a land fight. He states that these crafts act like cavalry by surprises and quick dashes, and, like cavalry, complete the ruin of the beaten. That they act by surprises and quick dashes we know ; that they complete the ruin of the beaten we do not know, nor is it at all proven that this is one of their functions. To complete the ruin of the beaten ship the torpedo boats will probably have to attack it where it has been left disabled and alone out of the *mélée* of the battle, and where it will be in a position well adapted to withstand the attacks of a torpedo boat which will then have no other vessels to shelter its approach. It can scarcely be thought that however disabled the battle-ship may be, it has been robbed of its quick-firing and machine guns, even though its main battery, or engines, or steering gear may have been so injured as to force it out of the line of battle. The analogy of torpedo boats with cavalry is pleasing to the imagination, but there appears to be no foundation in reason or naval logic for this comparison. Even as scouts they fail in heavy weather, and, except under special conditions, the analogy fails in that respect also.

In his discussion of rams Mr. Wilson says "ability to ram depends upon speed and handiness in the assailant, and the want of these qualities in the assailed." This assertion is often made by writers of the present day, and is doubtless correct in great degree when applied to battles

between single ships. It is, however, as we have said above, with fleet engagements that navies have to concern themselves principally, and in these, when close action is joined and the rams leaving the shelter of the heavy ships enter the confusion of the *mêlée*, the necessity of great speed will not be apparent. It is not a question of pursuing a single ship and manoeuvring perhaps for hours to obtain a commanding position from which to ram ; but, on the contrary, a sudden charge in the midst of a crowd of ships and a rain of projectiles and the delivering of a sudden blow ; or failing that, an attempt on the next astern ; in all, a matter of minutes, perhaps seconds. The author's reasoning, therefore, that the necessity for high speed demands heavy boilers, powerful engines, a strong hull, and hence a high displacement, is deprived of its foundation. That the ram type of vessels should be a special class may be justly questioned. Battle-ships themselves, it is sometimes argued, will make the most convenient rams.

In considering tactical formations the author has indicated nine, and finally settles upon "line ahead," or what we call "column," as the battle formation. His reasons, such as the flexibility, convenience, and other virtues of this disposition of his ships, are clear and convincing. His ruling conception of the battle is two such columns engaging each other on parallel lines, and at from 1000 to 3000 yards distance, with their lighter vessels also in column on their outer flanks. He speaks of tactical manoeuvres, probably preceding the battle, and perhaps following the opening of fire, but his reference to these is vague, and he contents himself as to details with the advantage of his smoke blowing from him towards the enemy, and of the sun dazzling the eyes of hostile gunners rather than his own.

Mr. Wilson's vagueness as to the tactics of fleets represents quite faithfully the condition of the naval mind at the present day, and since his book is avowedly a record of facts, and claims for itself no originality of suggestion, it is a merit rather than a fault that he should by simple omission call attention to this condition of affairs, and to the almost grotesque position of modern navies in regard to naval tactics.

Two other principal chapters of the second volume are "Ironclad Catastrophes," and "The Development of the English Battle-ship." They are recommended to the reader as both interesting and instructive, and we regret that space does not permit our giving extracts from their many excellent descriptions.

H. C. TAYLOR.

Studies in Diplomacy. Translated from the French of Count BENEDETTI. (London and New York: Macmillan and Co. 1896. Pp. lxix, 323.)

COUNT BENEDETTI has set for himself a difficult task. Charged by French writers and politicians with having inefficiently discharged his mis-